

PRODUCTION AND MANUFACTURE OF SILK.

PETITION

OF

JONATHAN H. COBB, OF DEDHAM, MASS.,

*For encouragement in the production and manufacture of Silk.*

JANUARY 26, 1835.

Referred to the Committee on Manufactures.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled :*

The subscriber respectfully represents, that, according to the Treasury reports, nine million one hundred and seventy-three thousand one hundred and ninety dollars value in foreign silk goods were imported into the United States in 1833, and only about one million two hundred thousand dollars value exported. The same year the product of hard labor of millions of our people, engaged in agriculture and the fisheries, was only five million six hundred and thirteen thousand four hundred and ten dollars. The product of all the flour and the fisheries together falls more than a million dollars short of paying for our imports of silk alone. That such an exhaustion of our national wealth calls loudly for the action of our National Legislature. That the mulberry tree is easily cultivated, and there need be no difficulty in reeling the silk from the cocoons, and that the useless time of thousands of families might be made to administer to this source of national wealth. That what seems to be wanted is some encouragement in the way of bounty on the planting of mulberry trees, and on every pound of merchantable silk reeled from the cocoons in the present improved method of reeling silk, with some facilities to the manufacturer in the production of merchantable goods.

Your memorialist has, at the expense of much time and money, been able to produce many articles of silk manufacture, which are saleable in our markets ; but the strenuous competition of foreigners makes it highly necessary that some aid should be granted to his infant establishment, otherwise it cannot be expected that an individual should give a permanent existence to this important branch of industry. He has been able, however, to get into operation all the requisite machinery for reeling, winding, doubling and twisting, and weaving silk, to the amount of

several thousand dollars, and to employ constantly from twenty to thirty hands for two or three years in the business, and is unwilling that the progress of the work should cease, which is likely to be the case unless some aid should be granted. He, therefore, respectfully solicits that pecuniary aid be afforded, upon condition,

1st. That he shall, within five years, establish a machine for the reeling of silk in each of the representative districts of the United States, and put the same into successful operation.

2d. That he shall supply each of said districts with two pounds of mulberry seed, and a suitable amount of the eggs of the silkworm, for gratuitous distribution, and shall communicate all the information in his power, through the medium of agricultural societies, lyceums, &c., respecting the culture of the mulberry and the production of silk.

3d. That he shall continue in operation the necessary machinery for winding, doubling, twisting, and weaving silk in the United States, at his own expense, as extensively as at present, for at least three years, leaving to individual States to offer such bounties as may be necessary for the encouragement of their own citizens in planting the mulberry and reeling the cocoons. And, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

JONATHAN H. COBB.

DEDHAM, MASS., *January 15, 1835.*